

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
May 21, 1985

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege and pleasure to be able to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the legislature, a group of seven exchange students or guests from England, hosted by Regina North Rotary Club. Ron Jones, who is the chairman of Rotary International Committee, and Peter Davey, the team leader from England, are with us.

And I would want to welcome them on behalf of the Hon. Jack Klein, and Mr. Klein will be meeting with the visitors later. And I would like the entire Assembly to please welcome these guests to the province of Saskatchewan.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. SANDBERG: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to introduce to you and to the members of this Assembly, a visitor from down east. Mr. Geoff Scott is a member of parliament for Hamilton-Wentworth. He was first elected in 1978, and he's been a member of parliament ever since.

Geoff, as well as being well-known as a member of parliament, prior to his '78 election was a prominent member of the parliamentary press gallery and a correspondent to CKCK here in Regina.

I might add that Mr. Scott is well-known as the man who taught Rich Little everything he knows.

So I'd ask all members to welcome him here today.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. GARNER: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure today to introduce on behalf of my colleague, the Minister of Rural Development, Mr. Louis Domotor, 34 grade 7 students from Watrous, Saskatchewan. They're sitting in the Speaker's gallery. The bus driver is Alva Turner. The teacher is Vern Rudneski.

I would like all members to join with me in welcoming them here today, and very hopefully we will have a very informative question period and that they'll have a safe journey home. And I will be meeting with them for refreshments right after question period.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MRS. CASWELL: — I'd like to introduce to you, and through you to the House, a broad-based group of people all over Saskatchewan. I can't mention their names, but I will mention a few. Rev. Jim Petruic of West Side Alliance; Pastor Straza of Maranatha Christian Academy; Father Kubach (and I'm maybe pronouncing his name wrong); and the president of the Catholic Women's League beside him; also Albert Olson of Brotherhood of Maintenance and Ways Union.

These people are here to watch the proceedings and to show their support for Bill 53, and I trust that all of you will join in welcoming them because many of them are constituents of other people.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTIONS

Collapse of Pioneer Trust

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier, and it deals with the biggest business failure in Saskatchewan history, the collapse of Pioneer Trust.

After arguing with some vigour that the Bill needed to be proceeded with, I noted that last Friday your government did not proceed with the Bill at all, and gave it not one minute of legislative time.

I assume that the unexpected step was in order that you might discuss a major change in your stance respecting Pioneer Trust. Can you then advise the House that you have now decided to have a public inquiry and that you will be proceeding with that forthright?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said to the legislature on Thursday or Friday, I haven't ruled out a public inquiry, and that's the case. I haven't ruled it out; it may come to pass.

As I mentioned to my colleagues at that day, or on Friday, if we could give a fair hearing to the interim report of the liquidator that's about to come down in, we expect, two to three weeks, then we'll find out more information, and we can react at that time, and we can go for more investigation, or public inquiry, or judicial inquiries, or all kinds of inquiries that may be appropriate.

But it seems to me only fair that if it's in the federal bailiwick and it's before their court liquidator and it's going to report back to their court, then at least we should let them provide us with an interim reports, so that we can move appropriately.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Supplementary, Mr. Premier. First I'm disappointed that you didn't take the opportunity to announce that your government would support a full public inquiry into the Pioneer Trust fiasco so that Saskatchewan people might know why they're being asked to pay out this \$28 million.

You will be aware, Mr. Premier, that those now calling for a public inquiry include not only the official opposition, but the editorial pages of several Saskatchewan newspapers, the Liberal Party, members of parliament, and senators from various political parties, even the Conservative MP who was chairman of the House of Commons finance committee, Mr. Don Blenkarn.

Do you not think in the face of all of those calls for an inquiry, all of whom know the alleged role of the liquidator, all of whom know that he's supposedly going to make an interim report, do you not feel that in the face of this massive call for a public inquiry you ought to do the honourable thing and support an inquiry into this whole fiasco and support it now?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I said that we might have an inquiry, and we may. I haven't ruled it out. I'm giving the federal jurisdiction at least a fair chance to provide us with some interim information, and I'm advised that it will be down in two to three weeks.

The Leader of the Opposition talks about editorials. Some editorials say it wouldn't be the thing to do. Some say that it would be. Honestly, we want to know what our options are when we look at what the liquidator is going to bring forward.

So I haven't ruled it out. We may. We're waiting at least to give a fair hearing to the federal liquidator.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — A new question, Mr. Speaker. It has been obvious to everyone that the Minister of Finance has mishandled this affair from the very beginning, something that you confirmed last week in public. He has steadfastly refused to hold a public inquiry, a position which you pointedly refused to endorse last week.

Since you've publicly contradicted your finance minister on two, at least two vital issues, and since you publicly expressed a lack of confidence in the way he's handled the matter, I wonder if you'll now do the honourable thing and appoint a new finance minister with the mandate to appoint a public inquiry to get at the bottom of this mess and provide some answers for the Saskatchewan public.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure if we go back and look at the question period on Friday, it's almost a verbatim of what went on Friday, and I said . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I know that you might want an inquiry, but I'll decide when there'll be an inquiry. Okay? I'll decide. And I've said to my hon. friends that we are going to make sure that we have the information provided by the liquidator.

And the member from Regina Centre says that it could have been handled in a different fashion. Well I said in a news conference, and I believe the minister said in this house, that you could have designed the letter differently. And you're saying, well, I guess the Minister of Finance should resign because he could have designed the letter differently.

Now you didn't support supporting the company to start with. The first impression I got you wanted to sell it to Co-op Trust. That was the first thing. You said, well, why don't you do this? Why don't you move it on to Co-op Trust and see if they can take hold of it? Okay? Well that was the first suggestion I heard from the hon. members.

So we go in and we say, well, we would like to help a Saskatchewan company. And you say, oh, you wouldn't. but we would like to help a Saskatchewan company, and we say that we will. And we take a look at it and say, well, I fit's going to be too much money — and I explained that to the media, as well, and to the opposition — that we wouldn't risk if we didn't think it was worth it. So we said, we won't do it, and you said, agree. They say, well, you should help those people that help their savings. We said, we agree. So now we have a Bill before the House that says we should help those with savings in Pioneer Trust, and you agree.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the opposition. We should help those people who have savings in Pioneer Trust. We all agree. And yet the opposition obviously doesn't want to do that, so we'll just have to wait until the opposition decides to co-operate so we can help those people who have savings in Pioneer Trust.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Supplementary, Mr. Speaker. I had not thought I was going to be treated to a discussion of every peripheral issue but the very one I raised.

The supplementary, Mr. Premier, is: how can you publicly disagree with your minister on two vital issues, express a lack of confidence in the way he's handled it, and expect him to have the moral authority to carry on as finance minister?

It is our suggestion to you, you have no option now but to find a new finance minister, having made the statements you did last week.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Chairman, the member from Regina Centre knows full well that when I say that a letter could be written differently isn't at all meaning that I'm going to say there's a lack of confidence in the Minister of Finance. We have the best Minister of Finance in

the country, and I'm very proud of him. He's a first class individual.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. DEVINE: — The Minister of Finance for the province of Saskatchewan has the courage to say: I hate to see a company go down; I want to see if I can help that company, and I think that's fair. Most Saskatchewan people would . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Most Saskatchewan people don't 'want to see gloom and doom. They want a Saskatchewan company to survive. Maybe the opposition doesn't want Saskatchewan companies to survive. They seem to take some delight in a company going down, though we on this side of the House don't take any delight in the company failing. I don't know why you should. We tried to help the company.

The Minister of Finance says, I will try to help because I know the federal government is going to pull its licence. Now I think that's an admirable thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, we tried to help a company who had invested all over western Canada and the United States, and we decided we couldn't, and the opposition says, good, you didn't help. Then, Mr. Speaker, we said we want to help those who have savings in there, and they say, good. But now they say: well, we're not sure. Well, I'm sure. Most Saskatchewan people feel sorry for pensioners, and hospitals, and R.M.s, and city councils that had their money in savings, and say, yes, you should help those folks, not the shareholders. The Minister of Finance has said that all along, and I commend him for his hard work.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. SHILLINGTON: — New question, Mr. Premier, you may be commending him for his hard work, but that's about all that you're commending him for.

Mr. Premier, your statement last week went beyond simply saying the letter might have been written differently. Your statement, if you are correctly quoted, is that the provincial government did not handle the matter properly. That was the way that you are quoted. That goes far beyond a mere discussion of the letter.

I suggest, Mr. Premier, that you were making the only statement you could, and I again ask you, Mr. Premier: how can express a lack of confidence in the way your finance minister handled such a major issue and expect that he will have the authority or the ability to carry on as finance minister? He's through, Mr. Premier. Will you admit it?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, my hon. friends know . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well, yes, they are. The member from Regina Centre is my friend. He admitted that on Friday. The Lake Valley boys. That's right.

My hon. colleagues know that when you go to help out a company that's in a great deal of difficulty, you do the best you can. You do the best you can. You do the best you can, and you look at the situation, and you say this: if the federal government is going to pull the licence on a particular company and we can help, we're going to try and help.

And the members opposite know that, and we tried to help. But it wasn't there. So we said we will do the next best thing; we'll make sure that those that have savings in the company will be protected. And the public agrees with that.

Now you say: well I'm sure that a minister should quit because he didn't design the letter properly . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Okay, you tell me what it is other than the letter that bothers you. What is it other than the letter?

Okay, he said, look it, I'll try to help you, and in the interim I'm going to explore this to see if it's

possible. And it's not. It's not possible. All right. Would you rather we not help them at all — those with savings? Is that what you want? You don't want any help at all. Is that it? Well I'd like to know whether you want to help those with savings in Pioneer Trust or not. Have you changed your mind?

Change your mind. All right. Well, Mr. Speaker, if they don't want to help anybody then in Pioneer Trust, even those with pensions, or people who have retired with money, then I think they should come forward. At least we know where they're at. First they want to sell it to Co-op Trust. Then they think we should bail them out. Then they say we shouldn't bail them out. And now they're saying, well I don't even know if you should help people who have savings in there.

All right. What would you like? Come on. I mean, they've changed their minds several times, Mr. Speaker. I guess . . . We have said we will help those with savings because it would be a good idea. You initially said you agreed, and that's the issue.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — One final supplementary. Mr. Premier, having admitted that the finance minister bungled an affair which has consequences to the Saskatchewan taxpayer of \$28 million, do you really feel it's appropriate for him carry on as finance minister, having made a mistake of that magnitude?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, let's make one thing clear. If at the outset — and the opposition must agree with this — if at the outset — please, the member from Regina Centre, please acknowledge this — if at the outset we'd have said, no help at all, none; then you come back and said, well we should help those with savings, the price wouldn't be any different. Right? None at all. No different.

So we said at the outset we would try and help, and then, when we looked at it, the bill is too big, say, we can't help the shareholders. We can't help them. We'd like to; we've tried; we looked; couldn't; decided we can't help them. We come back and say those with savings should have some assurance when they put their money in the bank in savings in Saskatchewan that it's safe. And you agree . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . All right.

So you're saying the wording of a letter, which the Minister of Finance drafted, cost a whole bunch more money. Well obviously that's not the case. So if you make your point and get right down to it, you've missed the fact that this side of the House has tried to help people across Saskatchewan, and you said you wouldn't do it at all.

Rainbow Bay Report

MR. KOSKIE: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I address a question to the Premier. Mr. Premier, some three weeks ago you announced the suspension of the member from Prince Albert as Legislative Secretary to the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources pending an internal study of the PC MLA's involvement in the Rainbow Bay Resort affair.

I ask you, Mr. Premier, has that internal report been completed and presented to you, and if not when can it be expected?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have a summary of the events on my desk, and I will be reporting to the legislature in the next day, or possibly two, at the outside.

MR. KOSKIE: — A new question to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. I want to ask the Premier a question about the purpose of the internal report. My question stems from the comments made by the Minister of Parks in the May 3rd edition of the *Battleford Telegraph*. And I want to quote just briefly from that report:

Mr. Maxwell said Thursday he hopes his investigation will be wrapped up in a week

to 10 days. He is simply on an information-gathering mission, he said. "It's not for me to determine if there's any conflict," said the minister.

In view of the minister's statement, I ask the Premier: if the minister is doing the investigation, does not in fact see a definite conflict of interest in respect to the minister indicating that he's just a fact-finding tour that he's on . . .

So I ask you if, indeed, if that's all he's doing, was it not the intentions and wasn't it indicated to the legislature that what he was doing is doing an in-depth review as to see whether there was, in fact, any conflict of interest with the involvement of the member from Prince Albert?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Well, Mr. Speaker, what I asked the minister to do, the new minister in the portfolio, was to review all the information and present it to me so I could examine it in some detail.

And while I was doing that, I said that the member from Prince Albert would no longer be the Legislative Secretary, and until I had all the facts, that would be the case, and that I would make my decision and look at it, and that's what I will do tomorrow or the next day.

MR. KOSKIE: — A supplemental. I wonder if the Premier can assure the Assembly that this so-called internal report by his minister will include other opinions of those who are concerned about the environmental impact of the Rainbow Bay resort proposal.

We have Stuart Houston, a well-known naturalist in Saskatoon, has called the Prince Albert MLA's resort proposal "the most addle-brained commercial venture I've ever heard of." Local residents have formed the Redberry environment group to stop the development.

And so what I'm asking you: has your internal investigation included input from outside people into this abortive attempt to set up one of your members in a business venture?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I will obviously have the information together in the very near future, and when I have it together, I'll present it to my hon. friend.

Mr. Speaker, if it's appropriate, I took notice of a couple of questions and the member from Shaunavon was asking me to respond. I could respond to a couple of them, at least two out of three today, if that's appropriate . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Well I did. I said it'll be . . . I'm putting it together, and I'll be reporting back to the House in the next day or two.

Safe Disposal of PCBs

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, the one question was with respect to PCBs, and I believe the questions were something along the line: what are the long-term hazards of the Saskatoon spill? And another question was with respect to an inventory of PCBs being prepared: is one being prepared in Saskatchewan?

With respect to hazards, I am informed that there are no long-term hazards at the spill site. This government is now investigating disposal of the material from this spill and the material from numerous other sites established under the NDP administration. It is precisely because of the importance of the safe disposal of PCBs that this government has moved to ensure a safe method of disposal.

There are hundreds of sites across the province where PCBs exist or are stored. Many of these sites were established under the former administration. Our government has decided to take action on the environmental issues of PCBs. To that end, an inventory of PCBs in the province was undertaken by the federal government in co-operation with the Saskatchewan Department of the Environment. To this end I would like to say that we are doing something about the whole

matter of PCBs in the province of Saskatchewan.

We now have, and are consulting with experts, world renowned authorities, and we have consulted with Environment Canada, and they have approved the process we are now proposing. We have consulted with the city of Regina and will consult further. And the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that we are acting to clean it up.

With respect to the inventory, the federal Department of Environment is compiling an inventory of PCBs and other hazardous chemicals across the country. In Saskatchewan they are compiling this inventory with the full co-operation of the Saskatchewan Department of the Environment. The inventory includes where they're being used, where the PCBs are being stored, and tracking the transportation of stored materials if sites change in the province.

Government Advertising

HON. MR. DEVINE: — The second question I believe that the hon. member from Shaunavon asked: will you provide the Assembly with the total cost of budget advertising? In reply, Mr. Speaker, I have some of the information that the hon. member is looking for. The invoices for the print and the radio ads are still being processed, but we'll certainly have those I expect by the time we get here in terms of estimates.

The costs are: the *Budget Address* book, 14,000 books, is \$46,004; the *Partnership for Progress*, four cornerstones outlined with respect to endowment funds, \$60,000; *Budget Highlights* pamphlet produced by Finance is \$7,900; and when the other invoices with respect to the radio programs are in, I'll be glad to provide them for the members.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — . . . to the Premier. The question I asked was very clearly the cost of the promotion on radio and TV for the tax increases. You bring in a report, and you avoid the question I ask, namely, TV and radio ads and newspaper that dealt with trying to promote tax increases. And the report you gave had nothing to do with the question I asked.

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, in response, we had an awful lot in the budget with respect to health and education and agriculture and jobs. We promoted the ideas of education and health and where to get a job and how to get this information. That's all in one package.

Now there are invoices with respect to this and invoices with respect to that, television ads or radio ads or newspaper, and they are broken down. Those are not sent in with respect to — or I don't have an invoice with respect to specifics. And when I do, I will provide them to the hon. member.

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I heard a good number of figures that the Premier gave to the House. Would he confirm that for the printing of the budget address and for the four corner-stones the total was over \$100,000, \$100,000 for printing these booklets for dissemination?

HON. MR. DEVINE: — For 14,000 books, which is the budget address, the bill was \$46,004.26. The *Partnership for Progress* which outlines the four corner-stones, health, education, jobs, and agriculture (and we added that because more and more people wanted them), \$60,539.39.

Closures and Cut-Backs — McGavin Foods Limited

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Labour and deals with the fact that McGavin Foods Limited has started to supply much of the Saskatchewan market with bun and bread products from its plant in Calgary, Alberta, even although it has a plant in Saskatchewan capable of producing those products. As a result, a number of lay-off notices have been issued, and the McGavin breadmaster or thrift stores in Swift Current, Yorkton, Moose Jaw

have been closed permanently.

In addition, long-term employees at the Regina plant have had their hours of work cut. More than two weeks ago you were informed of that, Mr. Minister, by the employees of McGavin Foods, and they haven't heard from you. My question is: has anyone heard from you? What have you done? Have you contacted the employers, the employee? Would you report to this House on what you have done with respect to this plant closure.

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Well Mr. Speaker, I will be checking with my officials. I have not had that memo in my office. I'll check with my deputy minister, and to this point in time I'm not aware of it.

MR. SHILLINGTON: — New question, Mr. Speaker. I gather what the minister said is he's done nothing at all. Mr. Minister, we have a plant in Saskatchewan that is capable of doing the job; we have employees who have worked for decades for the plant; and now this company has terminated the job security of some, and threatened others.

I ask you, Mr. Minister, if you think that's the definition of a good corporate citizen; and if not, do you not think it would be appropriate for you to use whatever prestige is left in your office and contact the employer, McGavin Foods Limited, and try to talk them into keeping that plant open?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Well, Mr. Speaker, as I told the member opposite, I'm not aware of that situation. And if my people in the department have it, I'll check with them today, as a matter of fact, and get an answer for you. If we can do anything to save jobs, we'll save jobs.

Amendments to The Labour Standards Act

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour dealing with something of which I would hope he would be aware. Can the minister inform the Assembly of what kind of amendments to The Labour Standards Act he has currently under study; when those amendments will be coming before the legislature; and whether he can tell us the current status, the current status of something called the provincial labour strategy?

HON. MR. McLAREN: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not working on any changes to The Labour Standards Act at the present time. Over the past couple of years we have had briefs coming in, but I have no intentions of opening up the Labour Standards Act at this time.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prince Albert Raiders Hockey Team

MR. MEAGHER: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of my colleagues in the legislature, the member for Prince Albert-Duck Lake, as well as the member for Shellbrook-Torch River, I would like to ask Mr. Speaker and fellow members of the House to join me in extending our congratulations to the best hockey team in Canada, the Prince Albert Raiders.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. MEAGHER: — Coach Terry Simpson, and the Raider organization, and the most enthusiastic fans in the country, have all made this spectacular achievement possible, Mr. Speaker. They are first class, and they're world class. And they do 'give 'er snoose'. As a matter of fact it could be said they don't say whoa in a mud hole — in fact they've never been in a mud hole.

But in just three years, Mr. Speaker, they have won the Memorial Cup. They've only been three years in this league, and I believe that they've brought great distinction, not only to Prince Albert,

to all of Saskatchewan, and I would ask the members to join me in congratulating the P.A. Raiders.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to add the congratulations of the official opposition to those expressed by the member for Prince Albert. Certainly all of us were very pleased that coach-manager Terry Simpson led his charges to the Memorial Cup. Some of us were a little concerned when they lost that first game to the Cataractes, but thereafter it was all wine and roses — and I prefer that to snooze if you don't mind?

And we certainly join with the member for Prince Albert in congratulating each and every member of that Memorial Cup championship team.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

STATEMENT BY MR. SPEAKER

Apology to the House and Withdrawal of Remarks

MR. SPEAKER: — I've delayed a ruling dealing with the matter raised by the Minister of Parks and Renewable Resources from May 14. The minister was not in his chair for a couple of days, and for that reason I've delayed the ruling.

I've had a chance to review the verbatim record for Tuesday, May 14th, and particularly page 2182 of that record.

During the oral question period I ruled that certain remarks by the Minister of Parks and Renewable resources were unparliamentary, and I sought a withdrawal. The minister in his withdrawal said, and I quote:

I abide by your ruling, Mr. Speaker, you're quite right, and I apologize to all the pigs in Saskatchewan.

This was not a withdrawal and, in fact, these remarks have no place in this Assembly. I therefore now ask the hon. minister, not only for a full and unconditional withdrawal, but also an apology to this Assembly.

HON. MR. MAXWELL: — Mr. Speaker, you and the members have my full and unconditional withdrawal of the remarks, and my apology.

Point of Privilege

MR. SPEAKER: — On a different matter, on Friday the member for Meadow Lake raised a point of privilege, stating that certain remarks that the member for Shaunavon made outside this House, and reported by the media that day, were a serious reflection on the deputy chairman of the committee of the whole, and constituted a contempt of this House.

I have carefully considered the transcripts of the remarks in question, and also comments . . . the comments by the member for Meadow Lake and the member for Regina Centre. The precedents of this Assembly indicate that reflections on the Chair have been consistently found to be a breach of privilege. I refer all hon. members to the precedents of this House, dated November 17, 1977; April 11, 1980; and April 24, 1980; the *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*.

It is not the function of the Speaker to decide the question of substance or whether a breach of privilege has, in fact, been committed. This is a question that can only be decided by the House itself.

I would refer you to *Beauchesne's* parliamentary *Rules and Forms*, Fifth Edition, paragraph 84.

It is my duty to determine whether a *prima facie* case of privilege has been made out by the member for Meadow Lake which justifies this matter taking precedence over other orders of the day.

Having reviewed the matter in question, I find that this case fulfils the conditions of a *prima facie* case of breach of privilege, and, therefore, I leave the member in the hands of the House to deal with as the House sees it.

HON. MR. McLEOD: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as a result of your ruling today, and at the conclusion of my remarks I'll be moving a motion asking the House to find certain remarks which I quoted in detail on Friday of the member for Shaunavon to be in contempt of this House, and further, to reprimand the member.

Mr. Speaker, a question of privilege is a most serious matter. It is with reluctance that I rise to move any motion relating to the conduct of another hon. member. I take no delight in calling the conduct of the hon. member for Shaunavon into question in this formal way. But as the House Leader, and as a member of this House, I have a duty to protect the integrity of the institution.

A key feature of this Assembly is the independent role played by our Speaker and chairman of committees. They must be protected against reflections on their actions. When their motives are questioned, we must rise to their defence. This is in keeping with the long tradition of British parliamentary democracy. And we all recognize that to fail to take such a position and to allow the Chair to be open and vulnerable to attack would be highly destructive to our legislative process.

Therefore, out of respect for the institution, but nevertheless with a sense of regret, I move the following motion, seconded by my colleague, the Minister of Energy, member for Saskatoon Sutherland:

That this Assembly finds the remarks of the member for Shaunavon, as reported on CBC radio and others on Friday, May 17, 1985, reflecting on the impartiality of the chairman of committees, to be in contempt of this House and reprimands the member.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

HON. MR. DEVINE: — Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce to you, and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, a relatively large gathering of athletes. In 1984 and 1985 — '84-85 year — the province of Saskatchewan had over 200 athletes that won national Canadian championships. I'm not sure if it's been done before, but that represents approximately one in 5,000 people in the province of Saskatchewan on a per capita basis that has gone on to become a Canadian national champion.

The Hon. Rick Folk and I hosted a dinner — it was the first time it's been held in the province of Saskatchewan — to give a bouquet and congratulate all the athletes. And in the Speaker's gallery and in the east gallery we have with us in the neighbourhood of 100 to 200 athletes who have become, and are, national champions, whether we go back to . . . Well, one was just mentioned, Terry Simpson and Rick Watson and the Raiders. They went on to represent . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . Wilson and the Raiders, that went on to win the Memorial Cup. They won the international . . . participated in the international cup. We've got the seniors national championship curlers here on both men and women, and on and on.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just wan to welcome them to the legislature, and I'll ask Rick Folk to say a few more things because he knows about them in some detail.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. FOLK: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to echo the Premier's remarks. It is indeed our pleasure to host the first ever luncheon for Canadian champions. Not only are all these athletes Saskatchewan champions and Saskatchewan representatives, but they have brought acclaim, not only to our province, but our country in the past year.

And as you can see, Mr. Speaker, there is no small number of them. They number over 200. And as you can also see, they range in age from 10 years old to over 60 in some cases.

So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I would like to have each and every MLA join with us in congratulating each and every athlete for their not only dedication and their performance in the past year, and wish them many years of continued competitive excellence.

Thank you very much.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. MR. BLAKENEY: — Mr. Speaker, let me join with the Premier and the member for Saskatoon University, the Minister of Culture and Recreation, in welcoming all of our Canadian champions.

It has been the custom of this legislature to greet individual groups of champions from time to time, and we have had the opportunity to greet curlers, some of whom are here, and bowlers, and other persons who have won Canadian championships. I know my colleague, the member for Qu'Appelle-Lumsden, has had the opportunity to introduce the junior curling champions here, but I think the idea of having a banquet at which all our Canadian champions can be honoured, suitably honoured, by the province of Saskatchewan, is a good one.

I congratulate the Premier and the minister on introducing this, and I join with him and the minister in welcoming them all, congratulating them for the honour they have brought to our province.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MOTION UNDER RULE 16

Small Business Interest Reduction Program

MR. PARKER: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise in the House and to commend the Government of Saskatchewan on introducing the Small Business Interest Reduction Program.

And at the end of my brief remarks, Mr. Speaker, I will be moving, seconded by my colleague from Melfort:

That this Assembly congratulates the Government of Saskatchewan and, in particular, the Minister of Tourism and Small Business for the establishment of a program to write down interest rates on loans to small businesses to as low as nine and five-eighths per cent, combined with the many other programs designed to provide support and assistance to the prime business sector of Saskatchewan, namely small business.

(1445)

Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Minister of Tourism and Small Business, has been travelling across this province the last month or so explaining the details of this program to our business community. And he reports back that the response he's received has been an enthusiastic one.

And I would suggest that it's been an enthusiastic response for two reasons: first, because business men and women see that the government has brought in a program that's going to help them with probably their most crucial problem, the threat of high interest rates; and secondly, because those business men and women see in this program yet another example of a government which responds to their concerns.

Mr. Speaker, since 1982 we have been consulting and listening widely to thousands and thousands of individuals, to hundreds of businesses and community groups. And I know for myself, Mr. Speaker, I've consulted with and listened to many business men in the city of Moose Jaw, and, in fact, many business men throughout this province since 1982, and one thing that continually comes out consistent is the fear that they have for the return of unprecedented high interest rates and the concern that that causes them in planning their business operations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as we committed ourselves and came to the assistance of property owners with our interest protection plan for mortgages, as we came to the aid of the farm sector and continually do, we also felt that we had a commitment to the small-business man because we realize the important part that the small-business community play in the backbone of this province.

I think, Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the Minister of Finance, perhaps put it best when he introduced the Partnership for Progress plan in his budget address of April 10th. That even he said, and I quote:

If you ask people what they really want of government, they reply they want their children to be provided with the education needed in tomorrow's world. They want the government to lay the groundwork for meaningful, productive employment. They want the family farm protected and strengthened. And they want their health care system to be first class. These are the things that really matter to people.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government which brings in an initiative like the Partnership for Progress. It's a bold new step for Saskatchewan, a step which I'm sure even the members opposite really must welcome. I don't think we'd ever get them to admit it, but I think that deep down they really do welcome it.

This initiative is going to secure our province's future into the 1990s. It strengthens and builds on our cornerstones of education, of employment, of agriculture, and, of course, health care. The four five-year funds under the Partnership for Progress are a direct response to what our citizens want. And we'll be consulting widely, again and again, to ensure that projects financed under these funds continue to reflect exactly what the Saskatchewan people want.

I mentioned the Partnership for Progress, Mr. Speaker, because the security that's *raison d'être* of that initiative is also at the heart of the new Small Business Interest Reduction Program. In fact, this program is one of the first to be funded under the Partnership for Progress and its new Employment Development Fund.

Mr. Speaker, you might say that for the next three years we're going to give the small-business community in this province a gigantic security blanket. Our new program will write down interest rates on loans to small businesses to as low as nine and five-eighths per cent. The program applies to business loans that are in existence now, and for new loans taken for establishing a new business or expanding an existing one. The maximum amount covered on a

loan under the program will be \$50,000.

Now I can imagine what the comments are going to be from the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, as is generally the case when this government comes out with a popular program, a program responding to the wishes and the concerns of the citizens of this province. The first thing the members opposite will do when they find that the program is widely accepted is, they'll start complaining that it doesn't go far enough. The first thing they're say is: well, it's nice, but why couldn't you have given them more money; or, why couldn't you drop the interest rate down to maybe 6 per cent?

I think that it's wise that the people of Saskatchewan recall that it was the members opposite who held government when the interest rates started to go out of proportion and rise dramatically. At that time, when interest rates rose to in the neighbourhood of 20 per cent, and the small-business men, along with the farmers and generally the homeowners in this province went to the government and asked for support and asked for assistance, it was that group opposite, Mr. Speaker, who said, "No, we've got other plans for your money. We've got luxury buses to buy, and we've got things that we have to buy to promote the growth of government. We can't be concerned about helping you on a day-to-day basis."

I think it's very important that we remember these things, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure that the citizens out there in this province do recall them. But I know for a fact that when the members opposite do comment on this program, the first thing they're going to say is that it doesn't go far enough, or that it doesn't reduce the interest rate low enough. And they said the same thing when we brought in our assistance for the Farm Purchase Program and, indeed, for the home mortgage program.

There are, admittedly, some exceptions. However, most small-business men in Saskatchewan with head offices in Saskatchewan are going to qualify for this program. Under this program there are two conditions which a small business must meet: one, the loan funds covered must be used for business purposes in the province, and I think that's for obvious reasons. We'd like the money to stay in the province, and we also want to maintain jobs and job security; and two, the aggregate of a small business's loan with financial institutions must not exceed \$250,000. Excluding loans involving real property; loans involving land and/or buildings — they're excluded from the interest program.

If we were calculating the amount of interest reduction to a business under the program as the difference between a base rate of nine and five-eighths per cent and the interest rate charged by the business's lending institution subject to an upper ceiling of prime plus 1 per cent, the savings which are realized can be used for many things. They can certainly improve a firm's bottom line. They can help a business make needed improvements, or do what all of us in this House are striving for, and that's to help create or maintain jobs.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, on speaking with many business men, one of the things that our retail merchants are finding is that, because of the uncertainty of rising interest rates, they find themselves becoming in more and more less competitive situation as it relates to inventories.

Many small-business men, in order to purchase at the right time of the year, and in order to purchase the amount of stock and inventory that they find necessary to get the best buying for the dollar, found that they just can't afford to take a chance and borrow the kind of money that's necessary, due to the uncertainty of interest rates, and this program is designed to directly assist them in overcoming those problem areas.

And business men from every part of this province are very, very supportive of this program. And as I mentioned, it's always unfortunate that we can't open the program up to include absolutely everybody, but Mr. Speaker, this program is designed to assist small-business men and that's exactly what it does, and the reaction that we've been getting from the small-business

community has been overwhelmingly successful.

This program went into effect at the beginning of May and will be in place until March 31, 1988. The benefits will be paid quarterly, from the date an application is approved to the program's termination date. I should also mention that if interest rates rise, so too will the interest reduction on a business loan.

We know that this program is going to provide small businesses with the stability that they seek. And judging from the response to the program thus far, the business men and women in the province of Saskatchewan know that also.

By protecting our business people over the next three years from the threat of rising interest rates, we're giving them the room to manoeuvre. And it's that security that will help them build for the future and thereby generate more economic activity in this province.

Mr. Speaker, when a business man is concerned about the uncertainty of interest rates, that affects virtually every aspect of a business operation. And small businesses in Saskatchewan are very unique. So when a government is trying to design programs to assist them in the uncertain times with which we face rising interests costs, we have to give the small-business men the benefit of the doubt. And that's exactly what we're doing with this program.

We're not saying to the small-business man, you can borrow this money at a preferred rate if you do this or if you do that with it. We recognize the ability and the knowledge and the individual abilities that the business community has in determining and knowing their own problems in their own respective areas. And by having this program designed the way it is designed, they can adapt to whatever needs they find that is necessary within their given region.

Some are going to use this money to ensure that they carry an adequate inventory. Some are going to use it for operating loans. Some will use it to increase their employment. But one way or another, Mr. Speaker, it's going to give small-business men the security that they're looking for out there, and it's going to give them the opportunity to increase their employment. And that's what we're all looking for.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm obviously a strong supporter of this program, and I'm pleased to have had this chance to share my support for it with my colleagues and members in the Assembly.

I'm going to be moving:

That this Assembly congratulates the Government of Saskatchewan, and in particular the Minister of Tourism and Small Business, for the establishment of a program to write down interest rates on loans to small businesses to as low as nine and five-eighths per cent, combined with the many other programs designed to provide support and assistance to the prime business sector of Saskatchewan, namely small business.

I will be moving this, seconded by my colleague, the member from Melfort.

MR. HODGINS: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is certainly very much my pleasure to second the motion. I feel it's a very good motion, and I really can't tell you how very excited I am about this program that we have, and I dare say that the business people of this whole province share the same excitement that I do about the program.

Mr. Speaker, before I go into the exact details of the program, I would like to talk to you a little bit about promises that were made, and promises that were kept. As I recall, back in the 1982 election, in the campaign we campaigned on a number of basic, what I would call pocket-book issues. And I recall that we promised the home owners of this province that we would reduce

their mortgage costs and protect them against the excessive interest charges that were incurring at the time. And we did that, Mr. Speaker, and I believe the statistics would show that approximately 40,000 home owners took advantage of our mortgage interest rate reduction program.

In addition, we promised the young farmers that they could own their own property, and that was an important program for our province, Mr. speaker. We let the young farmers borrow money at 8 per cent interest instead of going out and renting their farm land from a government agency. And I think the vast majority of people in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, would agree that the farmers of this province should own their own land if at all possible. And our farm purchase program delivered on that commitment to the young farmers.

Now for the business people, Mr. Speaker, both business men and business women — we have them both — we made a promise to them that we would help them in their businesses grow and prosper and flourish, rather than installing hurdles against private enterprise. And we took away a lot of those hurdles, Mr. Speaker. I think you would recall that we abolished about 1,000 redundant regulations that the former administration had — 1,100, pardon me — that impeded the business progress of this province. And Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have improved the business climate, improved it through a number of programs, a number of investment and incentive programs that were tailored to the needs of Saskatchewan business people.

And Mr. Speaker, we made another promise and another commitment to our business community, and that was to do something about the high cost of interest rates. And as a result of our April 10th budget, we're delivering on that commitment as well. And Mr. Speaker, I think back to the years 1980-1981, and I recall my colleagues in business when they were paying interest rates of 16 and 17 per cent on their mortgages, and their operating loans were 22 and 23 and 24 per cent. And I remember that, Mr. Speaker, because I travelled throughout this province in business speaking with my colleagues in various types of businesses.

And where were the NDP to help my business colleagues when interest rates were 23 and 24 per cent? Do you know where they were, Mr. Speaker? They were taking our hard-earned tax dollars, and they were lending them out to eastern developers to build a \$45 million mall down-town Regina. And there's nothing wrong with the mall, Mr. Speaker, it's a lovely mall. I shop there myself. But Mr. Speaker, was it wise, was it prudent at a time when our business people in the province were paying 23 and 24 per cent on their operating loans; was it wise to lend \$45 million to eastern developers? I dare say, Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of people in this province would say no, it was not prudent, it was not wise. It was squandering their hard-earned tax dollars.

(1500)

And Mr. Speaker, what we've done is we've taken that nine and five-eighths per cent interest figure, and we've used it to help the people in Saskatchewan, and our program is going to reduce the interest rates on business people's loans to as low as nine and five-eighths. And what this will do, Mr. Speaker, is give them some relief and help them to make those improvements that were put off, help them to make those expansions that were necessary. These are going to be, Mr. Speaker, the job creators and the risk takers of the province that we're helping.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the *Partnership for Progress* plan as it was called — it was introduced by my colleague, the Minister of Finance — has allowed us to make good on this promise. Under the new Employment Development Fund we are going to write down those interest rates, and it's not for a single year, Mr. Speaker, it's a three-year program.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. HODGINS: — The details of the program briefly, Mr. Speaker, the program will cover

operating and term loans obtained prior to May 1st of this year. And as well it will cover all loans taken out after that date for new businesses and business expansions. And most small businesses in Saskatchewan were qualified. It is virtually a universal program. It's not, good for one, and not good for another. It's almost universal, Mr. Speaker, in that most business people in our province will qualify.

And it's going to cost a lot of money. It's going to cost \$9 million, it's estimated this year, and between 20 and \$30 million over the course of the program. And that is a lot of money. But it's a small and wise investment when you stack it up against the economic activity that it will generate. It's a small price, Mr. Speaker, and here again I compare that investment, if you like, to the investment that was handed out by the NDP back in 1980-81 to the eastern developers.

This program will give our business people a great deal of security, and when our business people wake up in the morning, they'll feel energetic about going to work because they know their government is there to work with them and to help them — help them grow and help them prosper. The government will not be there to place hurdles in their way, to turn a deaf ear if interest rates go out of line. No, the government of today is listening, Mr. Speaker, and the business people of today, I don't believe, have ever had a more optimistic outlook.

And I'll be the first to admit that we have gone through a recession, and maybe business hasn't been as good as it could have been in the last few years. But I look back again to the buoyancy of the 1970s, and I wish we could have been government at that time. What we could have done, Mr. Speaker, to the future of this province, had we been government at that time, instead of taking hard-earned tax dollars and squandering it to eastern developers, squandering it to uranium mines, \$600 million that the North of our province spent on a uranium mine. And what has that returned us? Not hardly a nickel in dividends. And then they want to close the mines.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that our government is the friend of business, and we all know in this province, Mr. Speaker, that the business people of this province are the gas and oil that fuels the economy. When a business is created, there's a valuation there, and that valuation is taxed, and those tax dollars go to build churches and hospitals and schools, and on and on.

I don't believe the taxpayers' money of this province could be better spent than in a program such as we are outlining here today. And I again, Mr. Speaker, am excited about this program, and I know that the excitement that I have is shared with virtually every business person in this province.

And I recall only a month or two ago, there was a meeting. The hon. minister of business was in my home city of Melfort, and there was a meeting there to outline the details of this program. I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, the hall that we were in was absolutely packed with business people. Virtually every business person in the Melfort and surrounding area was there, and they were enthusiastic about the program. They were excited about the program, and they said, "At last."

Mr. Speaker, judging from that meeting, and judging from the inquiries that the Department of Tourism and Small Business is getting, I know that this program has been well designed; it's been much needed; and it's demanded by the people in Saskatchewan, and I know they are going to be very, very happy with it.

AN HON. MEMBER: — Responding to the wishes of the people.

MR. HODGINS: — Exactly. We are responding to the wishes of the people, and I believe, Mr. Speaker, that that is what we were elected for — to listen to the people, see what their demands are, and meet those demands. And I believe with all my heart that we have done that.

But I'd like at this time to commend the Minister of Small Business for outlining this program — a program that is cost-efficient. It's not a program that's going to the top-heavy in government

bureaucrats to administer. It's going to be very, very cost-efficient — a program where virtually every dollar is going to be handed to the people and not wasted in bureaucratic nightmares as we have seen in so many other government programs over the past many years.

It's very much my pleasure to second this motion, Mr. Speaker, and once again I want to say how excited I am about it, and how very certain I am that it's a program that will be good for the people of this province.

And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that I can speak with some degree of authority. I'm not wise beyond my years. I'm hardly 30. But I have travelled this province. I've been born and raised in a family business. I've operated my own business since 1978. And I deal with a vast number of business people — farmers, and automobile dealers, equipment dealers, machine fabricating companies, small businesses — and I'm out talking with these people.

And I speak with some degree of authority, Mr. Speaker, and, like I say, I'm a young man yet, but the experience that I've had in my few years lends me to believe that the people of this province deserve a program like this, and are going to be very, very happy with this program.

So once again it is my pleasure . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. It is my duty to inform the member that his time has elapsed.

MR. LINGENFELTER: — I want to first thank the members opposite for that kind introduction, and also if I could, Mr. Speaker, welcome the many people who are here in the galleries here today. I'm only sorry they're not here to hear this debate on Rule 16, but I welcome them here, and I'm sure they look forward to the debate on . . . I believe they're here for the debate on Bill 53.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my remarks by letting the Assembly know that at the conclusion of my remarks I intend to move an amendment which will basically say that all of the words after "Assembly" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

regrets that the government's policy of tax increases and reduced services for small business and customers will hinder economic renewal in the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, when I complete my remarks I will be moving that amendment, seconded by the member for Regina Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I find it a little unusual that we would be standing here congratulating a government that has done anything but help the small-business people in Saskatchewan, and I refer to the comments and the speeches that are presently being made by the Premier and the Minister of Energy and Mines when they are talking about who in fact they really are helping in the area of economic development and in terms of business.

I will not be the one that will ever argue that the Minister of Energy, Mr. Speaker, has not been able to help the large multinational oil companies. I will not argue the point that large business, large out-of-province business is being helped to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars each year that this government is in power.

But, Mr. Speaker, I fail to see where the help for small business is coming. If you look at the resolution, basically it says that we congratulate the government for announcing now, nine and five-eighths interest in the province of Saskatchewan.

And I want to say that today on the news we are hearing that the prime rate in Canada has gone down to ten and a half per cent. So what we are in fact saying is that we now have a government that is so helpful that at time when the number of small-business people in this province going bankrupt is at record numbers — last year, in fact, the number in the province was 306

bankruptcies — that this government now says it is going to lower the interest rate by less than 1 per cent.

I say, bully for the government. More than three years after they were elected, promising to help small business, they're going to lower the interest rate for small businesses who are still in business. And I'll tell you, there's about 1,000 less than there were when this government took office. They're going to lower the interest rate by less than 1 per cent for those who are eligible. And there's a long arduous program that you have to go through and a lot of hoops and talking to a lot of Tories that you have to go through before you get the loan.

Well I want to say that in the Shaunavon constituency the small-business people who were promised the removal of the sales tax at the time of the last election are not very impressed with this government, nor are they impressed with nine and five-eighths interest when they can go to the credit union and get 10 per cent interest. They're not very impressed at all because when they say, do I go to my credit union or my bank, and forego all the red Tory tape, they say there's little question what we're going to do.

So while it's a good announcement and you'll be able to set up another administration and another whole bureaucracy to run this little program costing the taxpayers thousands of dollars, I want to say that there will not be a great deal of help coming for the business people, and they are telling me that. They are saying this is yet another Tory program, too little too late, when the promise was they were going to cut the sales tax and remove the sales tax in the province of Saskatchewan.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, the man who is still the Minister of Finance — and many people are questioning why — was in south-west Saskatchewan, was in the member for Morse's constituency and the member for Swift Current and the member for Maple Creek, and he at chamber of commerce meetings promised to take the sales tax off if he became the finance minister. He made that promise.

He didn't say, I'm going to run the province into a billion-dollar debt. He didn't say, I'm going to extend the sales tax to used automobiles. That's not what he told the member for Morse's farmers when he was out campaigning. He didn't say that. He didn't promise to increase the sales tax and put it on used automobiles . . . (inaudible interjection) . . . No, it wasn't the member for Morse's seat at that time, nor will it be after the next election, because those promises that were broken in the last three years are going to come back to haunt you.

There was no promise to increase the sales tax on used automobiles. There was no promise to increase property taxes on the farms to the tune of 4 and \$500. That promise wasn't made. There was no promise to increase the income tax and introduce a whole new structure of income tax in the province of Saskatchewan.

Those tax incentives were brought in by a minister and by a government that is desperate for cash — desperate for cash to the point that they can no longer get loans and borrow more money so they are up against the wall and they are having to increase taxes in many, many areas.

But I'll get back to the main point of this debate, and that is: what are they doing for small business?

Now it's been argued that the millions of dollars they are giving to large oil companies is the way to go. Now you can argue whether or not \$200 million a year to oil companies is the right way to spend our tax dollars, or whether you could possibly stimulate the economy just as well or better by giving 100 million to small business and 100 million to large business, or 50 million to the big oil companies and 50 million to farmers and some to small business. But the argument that the only people in this province who need tax breaks are the oil companies, flies in the face of reality.

Last year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will know and you will have heard that Imperial Oil announced an 84 per cent increase in their profits, an 84 per cent increase in their profits. And the Minister of Energy and Mines says that company isn't even active here. Well he would be interested to know that many of the majors are active in the province of Saskatchewan, and as a result of the new energy agreement signed between himself and the federal minister, that many more millions of dollars will be going to the oil companies out of the pockets of the ordinary taxpayers in this country.

And what we have to ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is where the priorities of this government are right, whether the priorities of this government are fair, and whether the middle- and low-income families should be taking more and more money out of their pockets to the tune of \$5,000 in five years for farmers, to the tune of 2,300 for wage earners, in five years, so oil companies can have more.

It boils down to that. How is it that at a time we have record unemployment, 42,000 in the province of Saskatchewan, record number of small-business bankruptcies, when is the last time you've heard of an oil company going broke in western Canada? I'll tell you, they're not going broke under this administration. They're not going broke under this administration, nor will they.

(1515)

The members can laugh about the taxation policies that they have introduced. They can laugh about whether or not they are fair in their dealing with ordinary people and the oil companies, but I want to tell them that they are not fair and the people of the province know it. The people in northern Saskatchewan know it. They know very well when their food subsidy was taken away so that oil companies could have more, so that the government would have more money for advertising, that that is not a fair government. And they have told us very clearly that the nine and five-eighths program announced now, when the interest rates have gone down to 10 per cent, is a joke.

And I want to say that the whole government is getting the reputation as being a joke, and that's why at the time of the next election, whenever they screw up their courage to call one, they will be very surprised at the results.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members opposite say, let's have an election in Shaunavon. Well I'll tell you, I'll challenge them today. If they adjourn the House and call an election, I'm ready to go, but I know that they are not. They will not call an election because the polls aren't right yet. But I want to give them one more word of advice: the polls aren't going to get any better for you boys because you're on the way out, and every indication is in Ontario, the Yukon, in by-elections happening across Canada that the radical right-wingers who dominate this House at the present time are not going to be back after the next election.

I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I run out of time, I would like to move the following amendment to the resolution. But before I do I would just like to make one more comment, and that has to do with the many small-business people who deal directly with the farm economy. In Shaunavon and Eastend and Maple Creek and Swift Current they are telling me that the most devastating time they have had since the late 1960s under Ross Thatcher.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: — Order. I must let the member know that his time is over.

MR. RYBCHUK: — That you, Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure . . . Okay, I guess I would like to take, before I join into this debate. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the guests that are in the galleries to listen to Bill 53. I would just beg their indulgence. It'll be debated in a very short while.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no doubt about it, small business is very important to the economy

of Saskatchewan. Just take a look at the amount of money that small business contributes to the Saskatchewan economy every year — over \$7.5 billion. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am sure you and all members of this Assembly would agree with me that small business is very important to Saskatchewan.

Back in the spring of 1982 the Progressive Conservative Party under the leadership of now Premier Devine, pledged to make small business a very major part of our economy. A pledge was made and read as follows, and I quote:

The Progressive Conservative Party recognizes the importance of small business to Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan's economy, and proposes increased measure to enhance the economic climate for small business in the province.

That was the commitment made in 1982, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Governments are judged by their performance on carrying out election pledges. Let us take a few moments and look at the record of this Progressive Conservative government with respect to small business.

Right away this government established a Department of Tourism and Small Business. In the past there was not a single government department that existed for the promotion and development of small business in Saskatchewan. The previous administration ignored small business.

Then in 1984 budget, the Progressive Conservative government established a Saskatchewan tax incentive program. It offered more opportunity for residents of this province to invest in Saskatchewan enterprises. The Venture Capital Tax Credit offered a 30 per cent provincial income tax credit to citizens who invested in Venture Capital Corporations providing equity to small manufacturing, processing, tourism, and research and development firms.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we who support the Progressive Conservative government in this Assembly, believe in the free enterprise system. We believe in a vibrant and healthy private sector. That is why the PC government has been cutting red tape and fighting to reduce a number of regulations that have hindered small business in the past. The mandate of the small business division in the Department of Tourism and Small Business is to encourage the stability and growth of the private sector in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government, the Progressive Conservative government, has lived up to that mandate. Over the past two years this government has worked hand in hand with the private sector. Allow me to cite a really good example of how this government encourages small business.

The Department of Tourism and Small Business published a booklet called *Starting a Business in Saskatchewan*. The member from Quill Lakes, you should get one of those.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the demand for that booklet has been quite incredible. It has gone through three printings, and nearly 12,000 copies have been requested by small business in Saskatchewan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the small-business sector obviously recognizes the practical value of this booklet that I have just mentioned.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the motion before this Assembly today congratulates the Government of Saskatchewan for the positive programs designed to help small business. Quite frankly, I would be amazed if any member of this Assembly would oppose such a motion.

Take, for example, the new program to write down interest rates on loans of small business, as low as nine and five-eighths per cent. Time and time again, I recall hearing from the Leader of the Opposition, asking just when we intend to introduce such a program. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has been introduced, and suddenly the Leader of the Opposition is very quiet. He's strangely quiet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the previous administration decided to finance the Cornwall Centre in down-town Regina, they loaned \$100 million to out-of-province developers at nine and five-eighths per cent and locked it in for 35 years — 35 years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan developers were completely overlooked and ignored by the previous administration. The contract for the Cornwall Centre was awarded directly to the eastern developer without tender. To add further insult to injury, local business merchants were offered less desirable space in the Cornwall Centre after the national and international firms had first pick. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was the attitude of the previous administration to small-business people in this province. They were willing to lend money at nine and five-eighths per cent to out-of-province developers but not to small-business people in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all know that high interest rates are a constant source of worry to small business, and the member from Shaunavon has just said that nine and five-eighths per cent is really not much less to them than the going rate is right now. Well that's fine, but business people remember not very many years ago, only a few years ago, when interest rates were topping 20 per cent and there. So what's guaranteeing that a couple years from now or a year from now, the interest rates will soar again somewhat, that they will have nine and five-eighths per cent, why the interest rates can be a potential threat to the security of a small business.

The Small Business Interest Reduction Program will provide relief from that worry. For the next three years this program will write down interest rates on loans to small businesses to as low as nine and five-eighths. The program applies to both operating and term loans in existence as of May 1st as of this year. The maximum amount covered by this program will be \$50,000. Most small businesses with head offices in Saskatchewan will qualify for this program.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel this program will provide small business with stability over the next few years and from any threat of rising interest rates, as I mentioned earlier.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the small interest rate reduction program is further evidence of the Progressive Conservative government's belief in small business. It is an important example of a solid commitment to help to build business in this province. All of this will result in more jobs. All of this will mean a strong, healthy economy.

I want to take a few moments to discuss the relationship between jobs and small business.

At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, they have done extensive research into small business. They have concluded that small businesses are creating more jobs, permanent jobs, than any other part of our economy. Small business is a vital part of our North American economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, take a look for example, at the success of the small business employment program here in Saskatchewan. It created 2,800 permanent jobs. Another 2,825 jobs were created as a result of the winter works employment program in consultation with business communities. Simply stated, free enterprise is working and putting people to work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we in Saskatchewan are proud of our Minister of Tourism and Small Business. The member from Regina North is a leader who is respected in the business community. He's a top-notch salesman for Saskatchewan. I am pleased that the motion before the House congratulates the minister for his excellent efforts. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the shopkeepers, the family business, the corner grocery store, the independent shoe store, the butcher shop, the barber shop, the neighbourhood bakery shop, and countless other small independent businesses throughout Saskatchewan recognize and appreciate the efforts of the Progressive Conservative government when it comes to small business.

Back in the spring of 1982, small-business people sent out a message. They wanted a

government that cared about and knew the value of small business. They wanted less government and intervention and no more intervention. They wanted stimulation, not stagnation. They wanted prosperity, not government hindrance. That is why the private sector looked to the Progressive Conservative commitment to small business and supported it.

In the three years since, we have lived up to that commitment and the small business interest rate reduction program is part of that ongoing commitment. That is why I urge every member of this House to support this motion.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MR. MYERS: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to introduce to you, and through you to the members of this Assembly, a group of 12 students from Aden Bowman Collegiate who are studying life skills work study groups. They are seated in the Speaker's gallery, and they are accompanied by their teachers, Joe Monahan and Dawn Driedger. I will be meeting with this group in the next half hour or so, but I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming this group to the Assembly and wishing them a safe trip home.

HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MOTION UNDER RULE 16

Small Business Interest Reduction Program

MR. SHILLINGTON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, rather.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise in this debate. I will, some time before the conclusion of my remarks, if I can keep an eye on the clock, move an amendment to the motion. Given the nature of these rules it is a difficult thing to do, I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this government's whole approach has been one of trying to co-opt large, out-of-province businesses. Their whole emphasis has been on attracting foreigners, large multinationals to the province. Their whole approach, Mr. Deputy Speaker, suggests a lack of confidence in Saskatchewan people. The slogan, open for business, is nothing but a clarion call to outsiders to come and do the job for us. It suggests that we do not have the confidence; Saskatchewan people don't have the ability to do the job for themselves. By making open for business the centre-piece of their economic program, they, in fact, express the lack of confidence in Saskatchewan business.

(1530)

The history of this province, Mr. Chairman, suggests that the approach won't work. In Saskatchewan, when we had a CCF government in office, a government that believed in small business, believed in Saskatchewan people, had confidence in them, worked with Saskatchewan people — they took the province from being nearly bankrupt in 1944 to a province with the highest per capita income in 1964 when they were defeated.

We then had a government in office for the next seven years. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they had a slogan. You'll never guess what it was. It was "Open for Business." I still have the pamphlet issued by the Thatcher government. Again, a clarion call to outsiders to come and do the job that we are apparently unable to do ourselves.

During the 1970s, once again, we had a government in office which believed in Saskatchewan people, had confidence in Saskatchewan people. We sought to build up the Saskatchewan economy from within. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again the results were spectacular. Saskatchewan went from being the poor sister of confederation, as it was in 1971, to having one of the strongest economies in Canada.

History seems to inevitably repeat itself. Now, in the 1980s, we have a government with no confidence in Saskatchewan people and, as I will go on to point out later on, has given very little assistance to Saskatchewan business and given enormous assistance to out-of-province, large multinationals — enormous assistance.

Mr. Speaker, we once again have a province whose economy is faltering. And it will continue to falter until this government realizes the strength of Saskatchewan and her ability to prosper depends, not in our ability to entice others to come and do the job for us, but to do it for ourselves.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to say a whole lot about the program introduced in this budget. Suffice it to say, Mr. Speaker, it is like so many programs this government has introduced; it seems designed not to work that has been the history of the programs this government has introduced for small business and farmers in the past. I ask members opposite: how many of them can remember the program for small business in the 1984 budget? I'll bet you very few of the members sitting in this House can remember what the program was. That was because it was almost a complete failure — it was almost a complete failure. It was the nonsensical notion that the government would deposit the money in financial institutions, and then the financial institutions would give small businesses a low interest loan. It didn't work. It was panned by all concerned, including the financial institutions.

We have another program today, Mr. Speaker. I have the letter from the Minister of Finance . . . from the Minister of Small Business, rather, in which the program was announced. To put it mildly — to put it mildly, Mr. Chairman, the letter is very hard to understand. It suggests a number of conflicting goals are going to be met, a number of conflicting guide-lines. It suggests that the primary purpose of the program is not at all to help small business but to create jobs. And I predict, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this program will be as successful as all the others have been, and that next year no government member will be able to remember what the program was that was announced this year.

As I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government's programs to assist farmers and small businesses seem designed not to have worked. And the failings of this government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have had a great impact on small business.

I don't think any government in recent times has come into office with more support and best wishes from small business than this government did in 1982. In 1982 this government enjoyed the best wishes and, I think, the support of a lot of small businesses. I don't think any group is as disappointed as are small business. While there have been hundreds of millions of dollars, as my colleague has said, hundreds of millions of dollars to assist foreign multinationals and virtually nothing to assist small business.

And the mistakes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that have been made by this government are ones that affect small business directly, more so than I think many members of the public, the small-business people in Saskatchewan recognize that the deficit is . . . the deficits which Canadian governments run are a prime cause in the continuing weakness of the Canadian economy and, indeed, the western economies.

And small business, I think more than the general public, are critical of this government for jumping into the deficit with both feet. Mr. Speaker, at least one can say for other Canadian governments that they got into deficits somewhat unwittingly. Deficits in most other Canadian provinces built up gradually over a space of a couple of decades until the point where they became a problem.

This government, as an intentional instrument of policy when it came into office, created a huge deficit, and has done nothing to date to cure that deficit. At least when this government came into office they had a long-term plan, Mr. Speaker; deficits were going to be eliminated within

the four-year term of the government. I have a copy of *Hansard* which the finance minister announced that.

That apparently is no longer, Mr. Deputy Speaker — that apparently is no longer this government's plan. This government seems to have no long-term plan for dealing with the deficit, and it is a serious . . . and it is a major cause of this government's eroding credibility with small business.

Another factor I would mention — I have had many small-business people mention it to me — is this government's complete inability and incompetence in dealing with the issue of jobs and job security. When people don't have jobs, or where they are not secure about their jobs, they are not spending money, and they are not making long-term commitments, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This government's war on working people has affected small-business people almost as much as it has affected working people itself. Wage-earners aren't spending money; small-business men are feeling the effect.

Our caucus met with a group of hotel owners about a month or two ago, and they said that when you guys were in office and people were confident, they were in our establishment spending money. Now we don't see them. That's true, I think, of most businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I want to, before the time elapses, I want to move, seconded by the member from Athabasca:

That all the words after the word "Assembly" be deleted, and the following substituted therefore:

regrets that the government's policy of tax increases and reduced services for small businesses and consumers will hinder economic renewal in our province.

MR. THOMPSON: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It gives me a great deal of pleasure today to rise and speak against the main motion, and speak in support of the amendment by my colleague from Regina Centre. And before I start, I just want to make a few comments about that main motion. It talks about the nine and five-eighths interest that they're going to write-down the loans for small business, and then, combined with many other programs designed to provide support and assistance to the prime business sector of Saskatchewan, namely the small business, and combined with many other programs.

And I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when one travels around Saskatchewan today, and you take a look at the problems that small business are facing, you can see that the programs that have been brought about by the Conservative government most certainly have not been successful.

To congratulate the Conservative government . . . and you walk through the shopping malls of our province, and one just has to take a look at the empty spaces in the shopping malls. And these are small-business people who have had businesses in there and no longer exist. And you walk through the malls, and there isn't a store on any day of the week that you walk into, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and I'm talking about small businesses that are in the shopping malls — and there isn't a day that you can walk in there that you don't see sale signs. They're trying to move the goods: 25 per cent off, 50 per cent off. It's just one continuous sale after another. This used to be once a year or so that they used to have sales, but now it's pretty well on a daily basis to try and attract the citizens of the province to go in there and purchase. And they're just not purchasing.

One can talk about your program to write down loans for small business to nine and five-eighths per cent, but as I have indicated before in this House, and I will do it again today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not what's going to solve the problem with small business. The only way that

small business are going to survive in the province, and you're going to see the province back on its feet, is to get people working again. And when you have 60,000 people in this province who are unemployed, most certainly they are not going to go out and are not going to be spending money to keep the small-business community alive and well. And that's what's happening. We have so many small businesses that are suffering because people are just not spending, and then, as I indicated, with 60,000 people unemployed.

So if they really want to tackle that problem of the small business and supporting small business, then I say to the Conservative government of Saskatchewan is to get this province working again. Bring down the unemployment rate to what it was under the NDP government. We were down to approximately 4 per cent. When the Conservative government took over, the unemployment rate in Saskatchewan was 4 per cent. Now that indicates that Saskatchewan people were working.

Now we take a look at the unemployment rate of around 10 per cent. And I say that that's just not acceptable, and that's not going to help small-business communities survive in this province.

The member from Regina Victoria, when he got up and spoke in the House, he indicated that when the NDP government was in power, that we were only interested in lending money to businesses outside of the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I want to say to the member from Regina Victoria that he should take a look at what the Conservative government has done with putting tax dollars, the taxpayers' dollars, out of this province.

We only have to take a look at the oil companies and the amount of money that the oil companies are taking out of this province on a yearly basis. We have to take a look at Manalta Coal of Calgary. And I want to say that Manalta Coal from Calgary, the Conservative government gave them a loan guarantee of \$96 million.

Now if that \$96 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was put into the small-business community in this province, or into projects that would create jobs and get people working again, then we would have a thriving business community. But if the conservative government continually wants to give money to the oil companies; if they want to guarantee loans from Manalta Coal of Calgary, fine. But that's most certainly not going to get people working in Saskatchewan.

We have to take a look at contracts that are going out of the province. And when we take a look at small-business men, or the business community of this province, we only have to take a look at the tree-planting business, and many small businesses in this province who used to, up until last year, would plant all the trees and hire students in the summer to do it. And last year, what did they do? They gave it to a contractor, the major contracts to a firm from British Columbia, for one-quarter of a cent less than the Saskatchewan bidders, and the Saskatchewan small-business community had been doing this for year in and year out. And all of a sudden they lost that to someone from British Columbia.

(1545)

But you know, this is what's hurting small business. They rely on government business, and one just can also drive around in any community in this province and in any city in this province, and you can gauge what has taken place. You would almost think that there's an election under way in some places when you see the For Sale signs on houses. You can go up the streets in Regina, Saskatoon — any city or town in this province.

I was in Lloydminster last weekend, and I can tell you, you ought to see the things that are for sale and for lease and for rent. And I tell you, that's what happening in this province. You can go into any city, and that's how you gauge what's happening. You can take a look at the office space. And I see the member from Lloydminster — he's talking from his seat again. But I tell you, when I was up in Lloydminster and I talked to some people, and I tell you, they're wondering what is

going to happen up there. And you see the For Sale signs, For Lease signs, For Rent — come and take it; it's there. They're not hanging on to it now. They want to get rid of it. That's the big open for business, all right.

I tell you, this province is closed for business. And if you take a look at the statistics, and the unemployed, the individuals who are on social assistance in this province, take a look at the food banks that are popping up, and the soup kitchens, then you know that small business is in trouble, not only in Lloydminster, but all over this province.

And when they were campaigning, they didn't tell the small-business man that they weren't going to take off the sales tax. They told the small-business community in Saskatchewan that they were going to, in their first term of office, completely eliminate the 4 per cent sales tax. Now just imagine, Mr. Speaker, if that 4 per cent sales tax would have been taken off. That would have meant a lot to the purchasers in this province, and they would have been out supporting small business. But that didn't come off.

As a matter of fact, what they did to the small-business community and to the public who support small business, they added taxes. The home owner's grant is now gone, and that's \$100 million a year out of the pockets of the taxpayers of this province. And if they had that \$100 million in their pockets, they would be out supporting small business. But it's gone — it's gone.

We have many small businesses around this province who make a living by selling used cars, and they tell us they're in trouble now. And why are they in trouble? Because the Conservative government, all of a sudden in their wisdom, decided that there should be a sales tax added on to used vehicles. And that's added a tremendous amount of money on to the price of used vehicles. And who does that hit? That hits the consumers of this province, and then that reflects back on small business, and small business once again gets another shot of taxes.

And we can go on and on. I talked about the elimination of the sales tax. I want to say that in northern Saskatchewan . . . the minister gets up and says small businesses are sprouting up all over the North. That's not taking place, Mr. Speaker. Most certainly it's not true. Small business in northern Saskatchewan are having their problems. They're being hit with the sales . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. It's my duty to inform the member his time has elapsed.

MR. BIRKBECK: — It's my pleasure to enter in the debate today, Mr. Speaker, under the rule 16 on the motion moved by the member for Moose Jaw North, and a good motion indeed.

Mr. Speaker, in debate in this House you can do one of two things. You can either take the high road or the low road. Well today, Mr. Speaker, I intend to do both. I intend to take both the high road and the low road.

First the high road, Mr. Speaker. I would like, just if the House would mind, if I could, on the indulgence of the House, just provide a lesson in mathematics for the members in opposition.

As you know, this has been an eagerly awaited program of our government, a program that will write down interest rates on loans to small-business as low as nine and five-eighths per cent for the next three years.

The amount of annual interest reduction to a qualifying business is based on the difference between the base rate of nine and five-eighths per cent and the interest rate charged by that business's lending institution, subject to a ceiling of prime plus 1 per cent.

For the purpose of this program, prime is defined as the rate charged by the Royal Bank of Canada's main branch in Regina to its most preferred customers.

Let's say prime is 11.25 per cent, Mr. Speaker. The percentage reduction would be 11.25 plus 1 per cent. That gives you 12.25 per cent less nine and five-eighths, with the remainder of two and five-eighths per cent.

Now on the maximum loan amount of 50,000, the savings would work out to 328.13 per quarter, or \$1,312.50 per year. If prime increases, so too will the amount of interest reduction.

Now I realize, Mr. Speaker, that \$1,312.50 a year doesn't seem like a lot of money to the members opposite. They are used to thinking in millions of dollars, of course the kind of money that they used to use to buy existing potash mines and to spend into the uranium industry.

They talk about, of course, the investments that this government has made in terms of royalties to the multinationals. They use that big argument all the time. Well I'd like to know who the NDP were helping when they stuck \$600 million into the uranium industry in northern Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me tell the opposition that 1,300 a year is a lot of money to small-business men. And, Mr. Speaker, the extra money that they will have in their pockets due to this program, the cash they need to improve the bottom line of their firms, make needed business improvements, or help maintain a created job, is much needed and much appreciated by the small-business man, Mr. Speaker, in this province.

And my colleague, the Minister of Finance, is projecting that those interest reductions to business are going to assist in generating over \$0.5 billion in direct economic activity in this fiscal year alone. That's definitely not small potatoes, Mr. Speaker.

Providing incentives to business is what this government is all about, Mr. Speaker. Providing incentives got 5,800 people working under our winter works employment program, and incentives created 2,800 permanent jobs under new small-business employment program.

And, Mr. Speaker, just briefly on that point, the member for Athabasca, the member indicated that we aren't doing very well in unemployment; the unemployment rate is high relevant to what it was under the NDP. Well, Mr. Speaker, we have consistently had the lowest unemployment rate in the country. And I would remind that member and the opposition in its entirety that this government — this government — has had more people employed, has employed more people than any other government previous to their being an administration.

We also, Mr. Speaker, were the only province in this country that had an increase in population — the only province that had an increase in population. So that member for Athabasca needs to be reminded, Mr. Speaker, he needs to be reminded that we are employing people, unfortunately, not as fast as they're able to come to this province, because they're fleeing here from NDP parts of the country, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I told you, Mr. Speaker, I intended to take both the high road and the low road. Well I've take a bit of the high road. I've indicated the billions of dollars that are being invested by this government into job creation and now into small business, and I want to just indicate: where did we get the idea of nine and five-eighths? It's been mentioned here a couple of times today.

We got the idea of nine and five-eighths, interesting enough, Mr. Speaker, from the NDP when they took and provided a \$45 million loan to central Canadians at nine and five-eighths. Oh, it was good enough for central Canadians, but not good enough for our own Saskatchewan business people. And I say shame on the NDP for that.

This government, Mr. Speaker, has recognized that interest relief through interest stabilization was necessary in this province, and that's what we've done. We've done it in the farm area and the agricultural sector through our Minister of Agriculture, the member for Weyburn — a whole

host of programs, farm loans, guarantees, interest write-downs. We've done that for the home owners, Mr. Speaker, sacred to people of this province, the home owners — 13.25 per cent for their home mortgages. So we've provided security there.

And then, yes, we lived up to our promise. We lived up to our promise. We've come in now with nine and five-eighths for the small-business man. And the member for Quill Lake doesn't like that. Of course he doesn't, because he wishes, Mr. Speaker, the leader of his party, the once premier, the member for Regina Elphinstone, had been smart enough to do the same for small business in this province when they were government.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BIRKBECK: — Now, Mr. Speaker, they talk of tax increases. The member for Shaunavon talked of tax increases that this government is imposing on the people of Saskatchewan. Well, he would know about tax increases, Mr. Speaker, because the Premier in Manitoba, whom is an NDP premier, since he came into office, has imposed not one or two or three, but seven tax increases on the people of Manitoba — seven tax increases.

Now then, and what has that done for the province of Manitoba? Has that done anything? No, it hasn't. Their credit rating has been bounced down not once, but twice, in Manitoba — twice since the NDP took office in Manitoba. What has happened here, in Saskatchewan, when a Progressive Conservative government replaced the NDP government here in Saskatchewan? Boom! Up she went! Up went the credit rating here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, any mind, even those in the opposition, can determine from that that the Progressive Conservative Party and Progressive Conservative governments, generally, are better managers of the economy, better managers of money. And that's as simple as it can be.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BIRKBECK: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I can't understand . . . I just can't, Mr. Speaker, understand. No, I can't understand all those minds, collectively, cannot get off this idea of always saying, oh, give it all, give-aways to the multinationals, those great big multinationals corporations.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what has the royalty chain structure accomplished for the people of this province? It has brought 400 new oil and gas companies to this province, set up since July, 1982 — 400 new businesses, Mr. Speaker. Over 130 new oil and gas industry service companies have opened here in the province of Saskatchewan since July of '82.

Well those are the benefits — those are the benefits. And where has that brought the oil industry revenue in this province? It is now the single largest source of revenue to the Government of Saskatchewan, and that's a burden off the taxpayers of this province.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. BIRKBECK: — Now, Mr. Speaker, whenever the NDP get up and criticize the multinational give-aways that they think that we're indulging in — which we're not; we're reaping great benefits to the people of Saskatchewan — they should be reminded, Mr. Speaker, that those people, those terrible multinationals that they so deplore, are now the biggest contributors to the tax base in this province. The biggest. So, Mr. Speaker, it goes without saying that I would be very much in support of this motion, and very much opposed to any amendments, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on, but I see that my time has elapsed, and I appreciate the opportunity of the House to have made some very interesting arguments. Thank you.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. KOSKIE: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the last speaker demonstrates the state of the party opposite. Desperate he is, looking and searching for facts to support this meagre, meagre effort to once again attempt to realign itself with the small-business community which they have effectively destroyed in three years.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that this here great proposal we're talking about today, this nine and five-eighths interest rate offered to small business men, do you know what that would come to in a single year if, in fact, the business community took the maximum? About \$9 million. But the interest rate is just about where what they're offering, as has been indicated.

But let's take a look at the sincerity of the members opposite and see what they have done to the small-business community of Saskatchewan. Let's take a look at the mass of tax increases that they have imposed which will have a detrimental effect on the small-business community of this province.

A hundred million dollars they have taken out of the taxpayers — and the consumers rather — through the elimination of the property improvement tax rebates; \$39 million with the introduction of the flat tax on small-business men and other citizens of this province; \$7 dollars they have extracted from the sales tax on used vehicles; \$28 million they're extracting in the province — \$174 million. And they offer up a reduced interest rate on loans of nine and five-eighths when you can go to your bank or credit unions and get it for just over 10 per cent. And they say they're on the side of the small-business man.

(1600)

When they came to office or when they were campaigning throughout this province they indicated that they would remove the sales tax. Five per cent sales tax in the first term is what they indicated to the taxpayers of this province — 5 per cent elimination in the first term of office. And what has happened?

Do you know the magnitude of that promise — what they were promising, what you people were promising to the business community and the citizens of this province in the elimination of the sales tax? Every point of sales tax is 70 to \$75 million. Five per cent removal of the sales tax. They were saying, we will cut the tax by \$350 million. And what have they done?

MR. SPEAKER: — It is my duty to inform the members that the 75 minutes allotted for this debate has elapsed.

PRIVATE BILLS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 53 — An Act respecting Freedom of Informed Choice concerning Abortions in Saskatchewan

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. I must advise the members in the galleries that they are not allowed to participate in the debate in the Chamber. The only participation is by elected members.

MRS. CASWELL: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure I rise today to give second reading of Bill No. 53, An Act respecting Freedom of Informed Choice concerning Abortions in Saskatchewan.

When we discuss the necessity of this Bill, I think that we have to go directly to the group of

people who abortion most affects, other than the obvious one of the unborn child, and that is women. And continually we have heard through the — might call the propaganda mill, that women want abortion, that women are for abortion, and that there is a group of nasty men who want to take this right away from us. And I think that this flies in the face of reality, and every poll, no matter what group does it, shows that women are consistently more opposed to abortion than men. This was shown in the Badgley report, and all over North America, it has consistently shown that women, particularly the young women, are becoming increasingly opposed to abortion.

And I think that the one group that is standing out in leadership in this issue is a group called “Women Exploited by Abortion.” They are a group of women who have gone through the abortion procedure, and they found that rather than being a solution, it became a central problem in their life. It caused all kinds of medical and psychological complications.

So the intent of my Bill is to in some way alleviate this problem by giving the women informed consent, that she has information made available to her that she can understand the risks to her life and to her health, that she can understand the complications. This is totally consistent with other things we do in society.

Over-the-counter drugs or prescription drugs often have a risk that must be stated and these risks are written up as a probability from medical studies. So it is not at all an unusual or new departure to insist that certain kinds of information be given to a woman before she takes a very, very serious step of applying to a therapeutic abortion committee.

I would like to read an article that was written by a man about a woman who had an abortion, and I would like to read parts of that, and I’m sure you will find it pertinent to the discussion. It starts (I won’t read the entire article) but:

Two years ago Laurie Nelson sat in a doctor’s office in Chicago.

And she goes on and she says about the experience, and this is her quotes:

Abortion is denial of a woman’s right to be supported through a difficult pregnancy (she said). Far from being a compassionate response to a woman’s need for help, it is a difficult situation. Abortion (she said) is an act of violence which a woman is often forced into by boy-friends, husbands, parents, and social workers who are unwilling to provide the real support the woman needs so that she can face the prospect of going through the pregnancy.

And she continues:

Women need help. They are offered abortions. The woman is really left with only one choice and worst of all she is left alone with that choice and the responsibility for it. It is not tolerance but indifference which lies behind the words: have an abortion if you want, it’s up to you.

Now technically in Canada law, abortion is not up to you. It is not abortion-on-demand law. It is under the Criminal Code that you only abort for the life and health of the mother. But the people have misused that Bill and I refer you to the, if one wants to read the transcript of the Borowski trial. Evidence of this misuse, this situation, so that it almost has in fact become abortion on demand and abortions are rubber stamped through the therapeutic abortion committee.

And she says, and this is very important I think:

Furthermore (she said) women are lied to with the pious intention of keeping them

from worrying or getting upset. Everyone is told that the operation is painless, which often it is not. Everyone is told that there are never any complications, immediately or long lasting, which (she said) is simply not true. About one out of four women who have had a legal or first-term abortion cannot bring a future pregnancy to term.

Laurie thinks that the choice of abortion should not even be given to women. That is the sort of choice one can reasonably ask to make, that is not . . . But even if one disagrees that abortion should be illegal, Laurie's experience shows the disastrous human effects an ill-considered abortion can have and how extremely important excellent counselling and complete information are. And I would like the Laurie Nelsons of the world to speak to us today, that these are women who have undergone the abortion procedure who have been faced with a stressful pregnancy for various reasons, and they chose, or they were encouraged to choose, or almost sometimes pushed into the so-called choice of abortion, and those problems resulting in that.

Here's another example of this. I assure you that this is not pleasant reading. "Tell us about your experience with abortion and its consequences," and here is a Nancy Jo Mann, of Women Exploited By Abortion, answers:

My experience goes back to 1974, the month of October, 30th day, the day that I killed my baby girl. It was a second trimester abortion. I was five and one-half months pregnant. I went to the doctor because family members had pressured me, encouraged me. There was no, Nancy, maybe you should reconsider, because that was not my idea in the first place; it was theirs. My husband walked out the door and deserted us. The responsibility of three children was just too much for him.

I went to my mother and my brother and asked, what am I going to do? And my mother said, it's obvious, Nancy. No man's going to want you with three children, let alone the two you already have. You're probably not going to amount to a hill of beans and you're probably going to be on welfare the rest of your life.

And following those three positive uplifting statements, she said, you're going to have an abortion. Then she called one of the leading ob-gyns in the Midwest, and she said, absolutely no problem, bring her on in.

And then it goes on to talk about . . . and she is the founder of this Women Exploited by Abortion, and I promise you I won't read this whole article.

What are some of the effects of abortion on women? I have women who cannot vacuum their carpets. They have to have their neighbours or husbands do it while they are at the grocery store because of the suction sound. You see, the suction machine used in many abortions makes that sucking sound. It's 29 times more powerful than the vacuum we use in our home. The majority of the women aren't put to sleep. It's done without being put to sleep. It's heart-breaking to me that they can't run vacuum cleaners, but it's a deep wound.

The psychological effect we see almost all the time is guilt. Others have suicidal impulses, a sense of loss and unfulfilment, mourning, regret and remorse, withdrawal, loss of confidence in decision-making capabilities — they feel that maybe they made a wrong decision, maybe they can't make another decision right in their life — lowering of self esteem, preoccupation with death, hostilities, self-destructive behaviour, anger and rage — you can lose your temper quickly — despair, helplessness, desire to remember the death date which is really weird but you do remember those dates very strongly, preoccupation with the would-be due date or due month.

She goes on to talk about how this organization has expanded and how that from one or two

people it has grown into an organization of tens of thousands of hurting women.

Now we could say, well, we could ignore these voices of these women and say, well, my rhetoric said that women want abortion, and that's what a handful of women said, and men said that women need abortion, and so these people are really an anomaly. But I think that when we look maybe at not so much the psychological effect of such things as how it affects their situation, let's just read about some hard, cold medical facts.

And this was from the Wynn report of the foundation for education and research. The report draws from 75 studies reviewing evidence from countries with long experience in legal abortion. And keep this in mind: I'm talking about what happens in abortions that were done by a legal clinic in the States or by our situation of legalizing it with the two exceptions under the Criminal Code.

Forty per cent (and this is some of the medical complications; I won't read them all) a 40 per cent increase in premature birth of the next child after one legal abortion due to damage to the cervix; 50 per cent increase in death of subsequent child around the time of birth due to prematurity; greater risk of mental retardation in subsequent child due to prematurity; a 30 to 40 per cent increase in miscarriages between the fourth and sixth month of pregnancy; 100 to 150 per cent increase in tubal pregnancies, that is a pregnancy that can result in the death of the mother and the child; a 400 per cent increase in infections of the uterus, cervix, tubes, etc.; 4 to 5 per cent rate of increase in sterility after one legal abortion.

(1615)

I could go on, but I think that we can see the necessity of such a Bill that these people must understand the complications, the possible complications of the press. I thought you gave a good word: they called it the abortions hazard Bill. And if we are concerned about the possibility of chemical damage or the possibility of many environmental problems, the possibility of over-the-counter drugs, surely that we can tell women about the possible complications of this very serious operation.

And here we talked from a Dr. C. Everett Koop who is now the Surgeon General of the United States. He is a world leader in surgery to pediatrics. It's called an article, "Deception of Demand."

Abortion, the whole issue has been foisted upon us through deception. Its advocates have convinced much of the American public and the courts (and this is American) that abortion concern is a fetus that is not a person in the true sense, that it concerns a woman's right of privacy . . . (and so on.)

Most people do not know that the younger the mother is the more likely she will suffer sterility later if she has an abortion. Studies in Canada indicate that sterility is as high as 30 per cent among women 15 to 17 years old who have had abortions.

Now we could go on, but I'm sure you get the point that indeed there are very definitive medical studies which show that women suffer complications and that these complications are often not told to them. Many say, if I had know what I know now, I would of never have had the abortion. Some people will argue on this Bill and say, well, they could go ahead anyway, and yes, under the present liberalized situation in Canada that is in fact true as long as it also fills in all the prerequisites mandated under the Criminal Code and the therapeutic abortions regulations.

But I think we can all agree that if we're really talking about choice . . . And that word is very big, and very few people want to be opposed to choice. Certainly if you have a philosophy of freedom, you like to give people as many choices as possible. You do not want to impose a religion on them or a lifestyle or anything. You want them to make the right choices, but if a

choice is not based on information, accurate information that weighs both sides of the situation, that weighs the possible complications, then really it's not choice at all.

There has not . . . The Criminal Code clearly makes abortion illegal except for certain situations. And so we're saying, well, in certain situations a woman can consent to an abortion if it's deemed that it's a threat to her life or health so that we're not . . . The law clearly still is on the side of life. I mean, we obviously don't have a law that says that abortion and taking a pregnancy to term are neutral factors. We do not have abortion on demand that says one choice is as good as another and we are morally neutral. The Criminal Code says that abortion is illegal except for certain restrictions.

And so within that limit, when people are taking this very serious step, then most certainly they need information. And why I've included such things as the husband to sign that he has received the information and has given consent — or in the case of a minor, the parent and the minor — is because in a difficult situation like that, often the second opinion is very important. There will be exceptions and it can go through court orders so there's not extreme cases where that could have undue suffering.

In the present law it is consistent that a minor has to have the parents sign for surgery, but in this law I'm recommending that the minor also sign because a minor maybe at 14 or 15 has very strong views about whether or not she wants to go through a pregnancy and we would not want the situation where she is pushed into that. And yet a minor is a person of immature years and it is conceded in society that they need parents even though the parents may not always make the choices that we think they should make. And we may say that we have conceded in society and through reality that minors do need parents and someone to help them in health, education, and social decisions. And so that's very consistent with the present system.

Some people will say, well . . . And this is one thing I think, just to get the suicide argument out of the way. I mean certainly an unwanted pregnancy in some situations is very stressful. There's no doubt about that. And some women are in a period of stress.

And I'm reading now from a Dr. Nathieson who is known for two things: that he was the abortion king, that he was involved in 60,000 abortions; and after his involvement with abortion he left that business and started dealing with the unborn as a patient. Since then he has become an advocate for the unborn, and here is some of the questions he answers: what about some women who refused an abortion and commit suicide? And I would like to read his answer into the record:

The clinical fact is that suicide virtually never results from pregnancy in and of itself. If pregnant women commit suicide, it is because of issues other than pregnancies. As it happens, pregnant women kill themselves noticeably less often than do non-pregnant women. It may even be that pregnancy is a protection against suicide.

A former New York City medical examiner once states that he's never, in his career, seen a single case of a pregnant woman who took her own life.

So there are those who would argue that if you have suicidal tendencies it's a good idea to get pregnant. But I think that we all agree that some abortions, excuse me, pregnancies are difficult, and this is why that the doctor is required to give a list of services in the community that can help someone take a pregnancy to term, not just in terms of the medical arena which of course it would help, but in terms of social, economic, or whatever other support services are required. And of course the community would probably volunteer this information, and it could be done by a doctor in a cheap, inexpensive pamphlet.

To show the broad base support of this Bill, I would like to read to you from a letter from the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, associate professor, L.M. Hanson, M.D., F.R.C.S.,

F.A.C.O.G., for those who like letters . . . He obviously is involved in several societies, etc. It's addressed to me.

I would like to add my support to the no doubt many who are supporting Bill 53. The present situation of uncontrolled abortions is an intolerable situation. We have seen many cases at our institution and I have counselled many cases where the patient did not have the faintest deal what procedure she was going to have.

This Bill will provide a truly informed choice for the patient. I've used Realtime . . . (inaudible) . . . ultrasound with some of these patients, and for the first time they seemed to realize that there was something other than tissue in the uterine cavity.

Patient education has always been the ultimate method of disease reduction and prevention. I support you fully in your efforts with Bill 53 and pray for rapid passage of this Bill.

Thank you for your concern. Yours very truly, Lorne M. Hanson, M.D.

I would like to table that today.

You often talk about it is debatable in society what is the definition of health. And that, I think, is very clear. But we have to make it clear that the "who" definition of health . . . the medical, social and physical well-being has never been put in as law.

But assuming that that would be in fact the law, let's see how some of what people are saying about the psychological problems and not . . . Here's from Sweden, which is known for its liberalized abortion laws —e this is about psychological effects of abortion.

Dr. Martin Engvold induced abortion in . . . (inaudible) . . . Dr. Engvold found that two to three and a half years later 10 per cent (this is obviously women who have undergone abortions) 10 per cent continued to feel the operation unpleasant, 14 had mild self-regrets, 11 per cent suffered serious self-reproach and self-regret, one per cent suffered gross psychiatric breakdown.

And I would say a one in one hundred chance that you will in fact be extremely suffering with psychiatric problems. I think that people should know that there is a probability of that. And World Health Organization, which is not noted for being a pro-life organization, quotes:

There is no doubt that the termination of a pregnancy may precipitate a serious psycho-neurotic or even psychotic reaction in a susceptible individual.

And consistently they say if you have indeed mental problems it will make them worse, so it is not a treatment for a mental illness. And that I think was an uncontested testimony at the Borowski trial.

I think getting closer to home, Dr. Eloise Jones, a psychiatrist practising in Saskatoon, states:

Approximately 97 per cent of abortions are done on psychiatric grounds. Abortion has not helped the self-image of any woman I have talked with. I was listening to one recently who shortly after abortion claimed it had not affected her, that it was a perfectly justified action. However, discovered she was frightened lest her teen-age daughter discover that she . . . and becoming increasingly tearful, hostile, and unresponsive to her husband. Dr. Jones has found women who have undergone abortion have frequent psychosomatic problems such as sexual frigidity, hatred for boy-friend or spouse, neurotic disturbances, and some deep depressed reactions.

And then it goes on. And Dr. Jones, I might add, is a woman who freely admits in her article that she at one time recommended abortion on psychiatric grounds. She was one of the doctors who would say yes to an abortion, but she found that the women were coming back with far serious psychiatric problems than when she first met them.

I never realized that when you're dealing with a subject which is obviously unpleasant but extremely important how much information you can get at one time, and I appreciate the co-operation of the members.

I think that I could go on and discuss more of this, but I think the point has been made. And certainly in the second reading of a Bill, in general principle. We don't have to dig up every medical fact or statistic or whatever. Suffice to say that I've given enough evidence that a problem does exist, that women are recognizing this problem, and that women are asking that other women not be exploited the way they have been done.

And we are seen that it's a Dr. Hanson who is a doctor who is training in terms, the future doctors of this province, and elsewhere in North America is saying that we badly need this kind of Bill.

And I think really whatever position you are, whether you call yourself pro-life or pro-choice, or whatever you can, you can't really legitimately argue against information. You can't legitimately argue that a husband who is obviously the one of two parents to the child can have no say as to whether or not his child is killed.

And I think more and more we're going in a direction that husbands are willingly taking over many child-rearing roles, and seeing a role of father as something that they . . . as they have always done, something that they greatly like and want, and they are very much involved in looking after that child. And so when we then turn around and say that although you are the father of the child, that you have no say in this decision, is contradictory. And I would say that there is a good case that it could be certainly against the charter of equality.

I think also, more and more, we are getting over the idea when we talk about a woman has a right to control her own body, and of course all of us would say that, and some of us being libertarians in such issues as seat-belts, etc., etc., would say yes to a lot of those things.

But we're talking about, as was clearly shown in many cases, we're not talking about the woman's body. We're talking about another body, another human being, male and female, and this body is separate and distinct from the woman. And although the woman might rationalize an abortion decision by talking about her own body, and although that her body may suffer from medical complications, etc., etc. — torn cervix, perforation of the uterus, etc., they clearly . . . an unborn child is killed. And to say we will hide that information from her because she might get upset, I think is an injustice.

Certainly there is a . . . eventually reality hits home, and then the woman is faced with a grief situation, a situation where she cannot handle because everyone has said that her situation of abandonment, of loss of a child, is supposed to be therapy. And there's certainly great medical stress when something she's grieving over is said that this is therapy.

(1630)

And I think that in the abortion debate there are many spectrums as to even among some mainstream churches. Today in the luncheon for . . . in support of this Bill, we saw pastors from all kinds of churches — Pentecostal, Alliance, Catholic, Anglican, and on and on — supporting this Bill. And even some churches who may not say, well, 100 per cent, I'm opposed to all abortions except for the life of the mother, get very nervous at the idea that this decision might be made hastily, and I would like to read from the United Church statement:

The United Church, therefore, upholds the conscientious right to choose to terminate a pregnancy in the early weeks, providing this decision, whatever the outcome, is made responsibly and with full knowledge, without easy rationalizations.

And so I think that that is consistent with the spirit of this Bill.

I think that I could go on, but we're going to deal with, in committee of the whole, where specific objections can be brought up, whether we can discuss how it fits in with the Criminal Code clearly in the responsibility of the province. Because the province has the responsibility of health and the Criminal Code gives us the responsibility over what kind of information is given to the therapeutic abortion committees.

But I think what is more important is that I would like to talk today about: why pass this Bill? I appreciate the private members' Bills are a nice way of somebody getting an issue before the people. Of course, I don't think that anybody needed to be told that Gay Caswell, or the member from Westmount, is concerned about this issue. And there are many, many of my colleagues who are concerned about this issue. We didn't just want to make a philosophical statement of our views, although that's important. And I appreciate the time to bring this information to you.

I think that the thing is that we have to see, as legislatures, that sometimes we forget about our partisan views. And I'm sure that everyone knows that I'm quite capable of being extremely partisan in my comments. But just as life is for everybody, I think also that to vote on such a Bill says that everyone should have the right to say yes to this Bill without a sense, I'm doing it because of a caucus whip or . . . I assure you that I wouldn't want . . . I want the whip to support this Bill — but that party discipline is such that: well this may not be for my party, this may be against my party. But it's a one-time as legislatures that we can say, I also not only have a political responsibility and a partisan responsibility, I have a responsibility to my constituents: I have a responsibility to my conscience; and I have a responsibility to make the kind of decisions that make this society more free, more healthy, and make a society where the defenseless are protected.

And I believe a woman facing a stressful pregnancy is often in a defenseless situation, is a woman who needs help, who needs facts and information, and who needs compassion and alternatives to killing the child. And I think, therefore, that I'm calling on all members of the House to help in speeding this Bill through the House. And I'm calling on members to forget about their partisan views and to say I think this is right and good.

When I hear about women exploited by abortion, I will not hide behind the old-line rhetoric, when we didn't have ultrasound, when we didn't have the kind of evidence we have today that they had— that the majority of people had in 1969 when they liberalized the abortion law, or in 1973 when Roe versus Wade came down.

It is a new area where we clearly understand, and more and more young people are understanding at a very early age that we're talking about two patients, and that both patients . . . One patient may lose her life, and the other patient may suffer medically and psychologically and therefore we must help both of them.

I think that we will confine our debates not to the rightness or wrongness of the present Canadian abortion law, because that is clearly federal jurisdiction. But I think that we can see this as one thing we can do within provincial jurisdiction. And it is appropriate, I think, that it was brought forward as a private members' Bill, because then we can all say, as you have done very kindly today, that we will give this serious consideration; we will give it a listen. And at this time when we reach out to human beings and say that we are human beings and we care about other human beings, and if . . .

This may be a somewhat silly story, but I remember a comic book I read when I was a girl. There was a cowboy, and the hero was looking after a Mexican boy who had put in jail unjustly. And the bad guy said to him: what's he to you? And the answer was: a human being. And I read the comic when I was nine years old, but I thought that was such a great line, and it was in a cowboy comic.

And so I think today what we're saying is: well what is this issue, the women hurting from abortion or possible abortion is something to us. And therefore I urge that you say: this person needs our help, and if we can do it through passing legislation, we will do so.

And also on a lighter note, I'm pleased to stand here, the day after Victoria Day, because as you know Queen Victoria ran an empire with nine children, nine living children. And I'm always surprised when people always wonder, why does the MLA for Westmount — why does she have six children and have enough time to be the MLA for a constituency, when it's only a few blocks, when this country celebrates the birthday of a lady who ran an empire and had nine.

So with that I will close . . . Oh, but with that, I will move second reading of Bill 53.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WEIMAN: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I find it very hard to add to or elaborate on what the member from Westmount so eloquently put forward these past few moments. However, what I would like to do regarding Bill 53, Mr. Speaker, is to recap and stress the informed or the information aspect of the Bill.

One of the great, if not the greatest, risks that a female can come up against in her life is that of pregnancy.

Now there are many who accept that risk as a fulfilment of their womanhood. As well, I believe that there are many who accept that risk as a demonstration of their familial love.

However, there are others in our society who for various reasons which I do not wish to debate pro or con, but who for various reasons cannot accept the consequences of that womanhood or the consequences of that pregnancy, and of course choose the route of termination.

This Bill's whole thrust is to inform women in our society of those risks that are involved when you choose that route of termination. The Bill asks very plainly and very succinctly that every woman should have the right to know the physiological and the anatomical characteristics of the unborn child, should she go that route.

Secondly, it asks that every woman in Saskatchewan, should she determine to make that decision to go that route, that every woman should know and be cognizant of the procedure that's involved, the procedure that's involved with their own bodies.

Thirdly, it asks that each woman should also be totally aware of the risks that are inherent in this particular medical procedure. It's definitely a Bill of Information. Every woman in Saskatchewan has the right to know fully the process that she will be willingly going through, but through an informed decision. And this is what this Bill asks.

Now I do not speak for all women in Saskatchewan. That's very obvious. I would never be able to do that. I cannot understand their feelings. I try to understand their feelings. I've only been trying for 39 years. I have a long way to go, and I quite frankly don't think I will ever understand. So I cannot speak for all women in this province.

But I can speak for myself and the feelings that I have — and I don't mean this flippantly — the

feelings that I have being married to a woman. What affects my wife spiritually will affect my children and myself as a family unit. What affects my wife mentally will have a bearing on how smoothly our family unit will function. And what affects my wife physically will definitely have a direct bearing on that family unit.

I suspect that other husbands in Saskatchewan, or other boy-friends, or other males, have that correlation of a direct and indirect effect on their lives which is determined by the way the female that they are with feels, whether mentally, physically, or spiritually. If a woman determines through a conscious, informed decision that she is not willing to take part in the risks inherent in a pregnancy and determines that she will go the route of abortion, because of the effect that she also has on her mate, whether legitimately or legally or not, has the right to know what is going to be transpiring with her body. And as I state, through an informed decision.

I myself, if I went to a doctor, again talking as a individual male, for whatever health problem that may transpire in my life, I would definitely want to know, I would demand to know, the nature of my health problem. Why not a woman? I would want to know the procedure that was to be used upon me. Why not a woman? I would want to know the risks involved or that could be involved with that particular procedure. Why not a woman?

We have heard many and much discussion over the years in Saskatchewan regarding the nature and the characteristics of abortion. We've heard people say it's a religious issue. So obviously the member from Fairview is a Catholic; it must be a religious issue.

We're being short-sighted if we say that because a person stands in the House or stands in any public forum or in any private dining room and is a Catholic, that it is a religious question, because it is not just the purview of Catholicism as a separate and distinct denomination. But if you mean catholic, in terms of the etymology of the word "catholic", which is universal, then you're right.

It is catholic, as demonstrated by the people that were introduced by the member from Westmount. It is universal in nature that the introductions that I heard included Presbyterians, United Church men, Roman Catholics, Lutherans. In that sense, if we follow the etymology of the word, it is catholic, and I wouldn't disagree there.

Is it an emotional issue? Yes. It's definitely an emotional issue. It's an emotional issue for those people who do not believe or understand or want to understand abortion, or the woman who must go through with an abortion through her own choice. Definitely it's an emotional issue. And it's an emotional issue for that woman who consciously decides to carry out an abortion. That will never go away, and no legislature or passing of Bills is going to make that emotionalism go away.

(1645)

Is it a moral issue? Yes, of course it's a moral issue. I've had many discussions with my constituents, and my family. Our western world, and particularly Canada, specifically Canada — is made up of laws that are based on morals and mores of 2,000 to 3,000 years of Judaeo-Christian thought. And we're going to have moral issues for the rest of our lives with us, and the lives of those following us. It is a moral issue, and that's not going to go away. That debate — religion, morality, emotionalism — will continue.

But zeroing in specifically to this Bill, I think we have to come to a common agreement that those issues are going to be out there all right, but what we are looking at is a Bill that talks about education, talks about information, talks about the rights of every woman in this province to know what is happening to her body. Those other issues won't go away and we will be grappling with them. And when I say we, I say collective we, as people of the whole province; not we as a political party. Those are issues that we'll be grappling with for many a long year, and I don't

think we'll ever come to a final resolution of those issues.

As I state and reiterate, it is a Bill of information, education, and, I might add, health. Very briefly — and I want to do this very briefly because it shall be gone through clause by clause in committee of the whole — I just want to break down the Bill into three subsections for those people who may not be familiar with the Bill.

Section 3 simply states that unless a committee certifies that it has obtained . . .

MR. SPEAKER: — Order, please. Order, please. I would advise the member that in second reading we cannot deal individually with clauses, but deal on the overall principle of the Bill.

MR. WEIMAN: — My apologies, Mr. Speaker. After three years I should have know that.

May I state, if I could break the Bill down into three parts, the general tone of the Bill.

There is one section that talks about shared responsibility — the member from Westmount alluded to that — the consent of the husband, the consent of the male, a shared responsibility, that the decision should not be primarily made by a unit of one. The decision to procreate was not made primarily by a unit of one.

The second section very simply is one of information that tells a woman what is going on within here, and what will go on during the medical procedure, and the risks that are inherent in it.

There is another area within the Bill that allows you to have the second thought, a second time to decide. It may sound very ambiguous to the people here, but as you stated, Mr. Speaker, I cannot go through with the specifics. I would just like to state that there are many other aspects of the Bill that I would like to touch upon, and I know that there are other members who have requested to speak. The time is running out, Mr. Speaker, and I do beg leave to adjourn debate.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Debate adjourned.

The Assembly adjourned at 4:50 p.m.